



MINUTES  
HUMAN RIGHTS AND RELATIONS COMMISSION  
July 28, 2015 at 7:00PM  
City Hall, Community Room

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Arseneault called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioners answering roll call were Chair Arseneault, Commissioners Burza, Kennedy, Rinn, Tian, Winnick, and Student Commissioner Weinert. Staff present: HRRC Staff Liaison, MJ Lamon, City Management Fellow Devin Massopust

Absent members: Commissioner Seidman and Student Commissioner Gates.

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Commissioner Kennedy moved to approve the July 28, 2015 meeting agenda. Commissioner Winnick seconded. Motion passed.

IV. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Kennedy moved to approve the June 23, 2015 minutes. Commissioner Burza seconded. Motion passed.

V. COMMUNITY COMMENT

Commissioner Kennedy introduced Eli, a new staff member at World Without Genocide and recent graduate of Carleton College. Kennedy stated that he will be working with her on the annual Days of Remembrance event.

Commissioner Vecchio-Smith arrived at 7:09 p.m.

VI. GUEST PRESENTER: Nekima Levy-Pounds

Commissioner Kennedy let the Commission know that Ms. Levy-Pounds was unable to attend the evening's meeting to present best practices on cities avoiding discrimination. Commissioner Kennedy suggested that she could contact Sarah Walker, who is involved in the MN Second Chance Coalition and the Prison Policy Initiative, as an alternative guest speaker, and in addition, we could pursue a member of the Civil Rights Division of the FBI in Minneapolis as a speaker.

The Commission decided that they would try to schedule Sarah Walker for the December 10<sup>th</sup> meeting as it will be televised. The Commission agreed that they also wanted to try to have a staff person from the FBI present, but agreed to wait until the October 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, as the annual work plan will be complete by that meeting.

## VII. REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Work Plan Updates

- a) Community Outreach: Commissioner Burza stated that there will be a series of meetings beginning in the first two weeks of October and that the preparation will begin in August. The flyer has been updated to be more persuasive in order to illicit more of a response and that the flyer will be disseminated in areas where certain demographics are likely to identify with the issues and topics. Mary Manderfeld of Edina Public Schools was present at the July 17 meeting of the working group and offered that the schools could perhaps host meetings as the demographics of those attending Edina Public Schools have changed. Commissioner Burza also noted that the working group is considering whether it is possible to offer daycare in order to entice and enable more people to come, especially those who have younger children.
- b) Human Rights City Designation: Commissioner Kennedy said she is putting together a list of Edina organizations where presentations could be scheduled that includes faith, educational and civic groups. The Edina League of Women Voters has been scheduled for two presentations. The plan is to contact HRRC Commissioners individually to learn about organizations to which commissioners have connections for additional presentation venues.
- c) Affordable Housing: Commissioner Winnick updated the Commission on the current status of the Affordable Housing Policy. He stated that the City Council asked that the matter be taken off the agenda at their previous meeting because they wanted to create a clause in the policy that would allow developers to make a cash payment in-lieu of developing the 20% quota of affordable units. Such a provision appears to be directly contrary to what the Commission wants to see established in Edina. Commissioner Winnick presented draft language for a second advisory communication to be sent to City Council to voice our opposition to the payments in-lieu-of policy.

Commissioner Kennedy asked if members of the HRRC should reach out directly to individual members of the City Council to voice their disapproval of the proposed provision.

Staff liaison Lamon replied that the Commission as a whole could try to complete a form of correspondence by the next meeting. Commissioner Winnick noted that the advisory communication would have to be submitted by the end of the next business day.

Commissioner Winnick also noted that any communications from the HRRC must go through the proper communications channels, but individual commissioners can voice their concerns as individuals and not speaking for the Commission as a whole.

Commissioner Vecchio-Smith stated that she opposed the new provision, but if the Affordable Housing Policy were to be passed with it included, she would like the formula to be more structured.

Chair Arseneault asked how the issue can be reframed in a memo to the City Council. Commissioner Kennedy replied that rational arguments may not work on such an emotional issue so must appeal to those emotions. The Commission agreed to reframe the issue as a personal one; and that it would be more effective to express the issue as Edina's need for housing for its workforce – for teachers, firefighters, and retail employees. Commissioners agreed that the Affordable Housing committee will finalize the advisory communication by tomorrow, to express our concern and opposition to the inclusion of a payment in-lieu fee.

- d) ADA Event Proposal: Commissioner Vecchio-Smith stated that she has not had the opportunity to speak to her friend regarding the impacts of the ADA. Commissioner Vecchio-Smith does have another interesting source that could be used as her sister is a board member of the Minnesota Association of Deaf Citizens and has been involved in policy issues through that. She noted that a series of anecdotes about what the law means for a deaf person in Edina could be used for the blog about impact of the ADA law.

#### B. Tom Oye Award Procedure Review

Commissioner Rinn presented her report on Tom Oye Award procedure that identified seven issues and potential solutions. The Commission thanked Commissioner Rinn for her good work.

Motion by Commissioner Winnick to accept all of the recommendations as written with the exception of #6 and to amend recommendation #6 so that

members can make nominations and vote, but recuse themselves from discussions. Seconded by Commissioner Kennedy. Motion passed.

#### C. Website Proposal

Commissioner Tian updated the Commission on recent changes to the website that he is requesting be made. He stated that the last paragraph on the HRRC webpage should be a conclusion paragraph about the Commission as a whole. Also, an Archive section will be created to house older accomplishments of the HRRC.

Motion by Commissioner Kennedy to approve the website changes with amended edits and to include the work plan and archive section on the site. Seconded by Commissioner Winnick. Motion passed.

#### D. Capitol Art Project

Chair Arseneault advised the Commission that she and Staff Liaison Lamon attended a meeting with representatives from other human rights commissions in surrounding communities regarding art at the state Capitol building. Jim Bear Jacobs, a member of the Turtle Clan of Mohican Nation and a member of the Healing Minnesota Stories group was the guest speaker. Jim Bear advised that the legislative Capitol Preservation Committee formed an art subcommittee to make recommendations regarding art at the Capitol. Much of the existing art is offensive as it inaccurately depicts history and is an inaccurate portrayal of indigenous peoples. Jim Bear's group wants to bring awareness of this opportunity during the Capitol restoration to influence what the art may look like at the Capitol, including the idea that the Capitol art should reflect the diversity of Minnesota. Chair Arseneault said it is unknown at this time how the art subcommittee will conduct its review, receive public input and form its recommendations, but we should learn more after the subcommittee meets.

Chair Arseneault noted that the initiative will be tracked and updates provided as available. Commissioner Kennedy asked if a note could be sent as a Commission voicing support for their work. Commissioner Winnick asked if this topic has been or should be referred to the Edina Public Art Committee as they may be able to play some role in future discussions regarding the topic. Chair Arseneault also will circle back with other commissions to see if there is opportunity to coordinate any action on the issue.

E. 2016 Work Plan

Staff Liaison Lamon let the Commission know that the August meeting would be devoted to developing the 2016 work plan and that members should be ready with ideas for discussion.

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE AND PETITION

No discussion took place, there being no correspondence.

IX. CHAIR AND COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Kennedy informed Commissioners of an opportunity to attend an upcoming annual meeting of Forward Global Women, and an opportunity for high school and college students to attend a summer institute on Religions and Genocide.

Chair Arseneault gave an update about a bias offence incident reported at Concord Elementary School. A derogatory and offensive word was written in lotion by the parking lot and had been investigated by Edina Police. Arseneault reviewed the Bias Offense response process and how it has been followed thus far. The next step is for Arseneault to initiate contact with Gwen Jackson of Edina Public Schools, and see what type of response or follow up may be desired.

X. STAFF COMMENTS

Staff Liaison Lamon stated that staff is looking at the Boards and Commissions bylaws and proposing a few technical changes that should have no impact on how the HRRC operates.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Kennedy moved to adjourn the July 28<sup>th</sup> meeting. Commissioner Vecchio-Smith seconded. Meeting adjourned at 9:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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MJ Lamon, HRRC Staff Liaison

Minutes Approved by HRRC August 25, 2015

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Pat Arseneault, HRRC Chair